

THE
S T O R Y
OF
L E F F E V R E,

FROM THE WORKS OF MR. STERNE.

PUT INTO VERSE BY

JANE TIMBURY. *K*

Compassion proper to mankind appears,
Which nature witness'd when she lent us tears;
Who can all sense of others ills escape
Is but a brute at best in human shape.

TATE'S JUV.

For life can never be sincerely blest'd;
Heav'n punishes the bad and proves the best

DRYDEN.

L O N D O N:

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AS Mr. STERNE's affecting Story of LE FEVRE has been so much admired by the sentimental part of the literary world, I hope I shall not give offence in taking the liberty to vary its garb, by putting it into verse. How far I have succeeded in the attempt, I must leave to the opinion of my readers. As I am not so vain as to imagine I could give it any additional beauties, I shall think myself very happy if I have not deprived it of its original ones.

The breath is short, the taper's spent,

And this is his last blaze.

LEE.

THE STORY OF LE FEVRE.

'T WAS in that summer when our brave allies
With Dendermond increas'd their victories,
My uncle Toby with the news inspir'd,
From the loud bustle of the town retir'd,

B

Decamp'd

Decamp'd in private from his house and friends,
 The faithful Corp'ral on his steps attends,
 By whose assistance daily he display'd
 His skill in sieges, batt'ry and blockade.
 Thus on his darling theme the day employ'd,
 The night's repast he quietly enjoy'd.
 Some new manœuvres forming in his mind,
 Trim, at respectful distance, sat behind ;
 For in compassion to his wounded knee,
 Which often pain'd him to a great degree,
 His master ne'er would suffer him to stand,
 Tho' sometimes Trim neglected that command,
 The only one he ever did neglect,
 In consequence of that profound respect,
 Which to express was still his chiefest care ;
 But this you say—is neither here nor there.
 'Tis very true—why do I tell it then ?
 Dear gentle reader you must ask my pen.
 Guided by that, I have no other plea ;
 I cannot govern that which governs me.

But

BUT to my story—where did I begin?
 Just as the landlord of a little inn
 Enter'd the Major's parlour, to request
 A glafs of sack to comfort a sick gueſt;
 I think he's of the Army—ſaid the hoſt;
 It is not longer than four days at moſt,
 Since to my houſe he came, but much I doubt
 He'll never go from thence, till carried out.
 In all that time he's hardly taſted food
 Till now, he thinks ſome wine would do him good.
 Poor Gentleman—I was reſolved to try,
 For could I neither borrow beg or buy,
 I do declare—ſo much for him I feel,
 I ſhou'd almoſt be tempted—even to ſteal.
 He thinks 'twou'd comfort him—I hope it will,
 We'er all concern'd for him he is ſo ill.
 Thou art an honeſt ſoul, my uncle ſaid,
 And thy good nature ſhall be well repaid.
 Tis pity ſuch as thee ſhould want for wealth,
 Come fill a glafs—to drink the poor man's health;

And take two bottles of it in your hand
 Tell him a dozen are at his command.
 If it will do him good, as many more.
 Trim, said my uncle—as he shut the door,
 I'll tell thee what I think. Although 'tis plain
 This landlord is a very feeling man,
 Yet I am well convinc'd that this his guest
 Must be of some rare qualities possess'd,
 That in so short a space as a few days,
 Could so much pity in his bosom raise.
 Aye—and of all his family, said Trim,
 He said, that they were all concern'd for him.
 Do ask him, Trim, whether he knows his name?
 Back to the parlour here the landlord came :
 Why truly, Sir, I have forgot it quite,
 But I can ask his son again to-night.
 Has he a son, then—yes, a little lad;
 But he, poor creature, is almost as bad.
 Both night and day he so laments and weeps,
 I think he scarcely either eats or sleeps.

For

For two days past he has hardly rais'd his head,
 Nor ever tir'd a moment from the bed.
 Poor thing, I'm almost fearful for his life,
 My uncle Goby here laid down his knife,
 Thrust back his plate—the Corp'ral did not stay
 For more commands, but took the things away.

STAY here a little—in the room to-night,
 The Major said, then took his pipe to light,
 Smoak'd a few whiffs, and call'd his man again
 Who bow'd, and both in silence still remain.
 Corp'ral, he said—the Corp'ral turn'd about;
 He said no more, but smoak'd his pipe quite out.

TRIM, I have got a project in my head,
 To put in practice e'er I go to bed;
 I'll wrap me up as warmly as I can,
 And pay a visit to the poor sick man.
 But as the night is rather cold and wet,
 My scarlet roquelaure I'd have you get.

Indeed,

Indeed, said Trim, I think it would be wrong,
 Your roquelaure has not been worn so long ;
 I fear you'd almost get your death of cold ;
 Your honour will excuse my being so bold.
 To offer my advice. Trim you are right,
 The Major said, I will not go to-night,
 But yet I know not how to go to rest.
 I fear this gentleman must be distressed ;
 I wish sincerely that I had not known
 So much of him and the poor boy his son,
 Unless I could know more—how must it be,
 An please you, sir, said Trim, leave that to me.
 I'll try to get acquainted with his man,
 And bring your honour all the news I can.
 Right, said my uncle, that perhaps will do ;
 Here take a shilling trim before you go
 To drink with him, you'll get to know the more,
 Ill know it all said Trim—and shut the door.

THE major now began, but all in vain,
 To plan some bus'ness for the next campaign,
 The landlord's story so engrossed his thought,
 Even Dandermond itself was quite forgot;
 He started from his chair and walk'd about,
 Then fill'd a second pipe and smoaked it out.

I thought my errand would have been in vain,
 The Corp'ral said—as he came in again:
 I fear'd your honour's patience would be tir'd,
 E'er I could get to know what you desir'd
 About the sick Lieutenant and his Son:
 Poor gentleman, his journey's almost done.
 He's of the Army, then, what corps I pray?
 The Major said, Sir, if you'll please to stay,
 I'll tell you all the story by degrees.
 Then Trim sit down, and tell it at your ease;
 I'll smoak another pipe while you go on,
 And will not interrupt you till you've done.

Trim

Trim made his bow, as usual while he stood,
Which meant to say, your honour's very good,
Then took his station in the window-seat,
The affecting tale in order to repeat.

AN please your honour, when I first began
I ask'd to speak with the Lieutenant's man;
Of whom I could enquire without restraint
All that was proper to enquire I meant.
Right, said the Major, that distinction's just,
No faithful servant will betray his trust.
They said he brought no servant of his own,
But came with hired horses to the town,
Which he discharg'd again. The second day,
Not being able to pursue his way
When he gets well, said I, then his design
Is, I suppose, the Army to rejoin.
Alas—replied the landlady to me,
I'm very certain that will never be.

In

In such a case I seldom reckon wrong,
 Besides, I heard the death-watch all night long;
 And if he dies—'twill be a heavy stroke
 To the poor youth, whose heart is almost broke.
 Just then he enter'd, to prepare a toast,
 (He is not older than twelve years at most)
 Rising and drawing him a chair I said,
 Permit me if you please to toast the bread.
 You're very kind, but I believe, said he,
 'Twill please my father best, if done by me,
 I took the fork, said Trim, with much respect,
 And said, I think his honour won't object
 By an old foldier's hand to have it done.
 The name of foldier quite o'erpow'r'd the son,
 Eager he press'd my hand, but could not speak,
 A flood of tears roll'd down his youthful cheek,
 Poor youth, my uncle said, I pity him,
 He has been bred up in the army, Trim;
 The name of foldier sounded in his ear
 Like a friend's name; I wish we had him here.

IF you'll believe me, Sir, the Corp'ral said,
 In the most tiresome march I ever had,
 I never felt such great desire for sleep,
 Nor yet for food—as now I had to weep.
 An please your honour, what could be the cause?
 My uncle rub'd his eyes, and made a pause—
 Why nothing, Trim, but that thou really art
 An honest fellow with a feeling heart.

THE Corp'ral made his bow and thus went on,
 I thought it proper when the toast was done
 To let him know by whose command I came
 And said, that though a stranger to his name
 Your honour beg'd he might be well supply'd
 With all your house and cellar could provide.
 You might, my uncle said, and wip'd his eyes,
 You might have offered him my purse likewise.
 He made a bow, said Trim, before he went,
 Which I suppose was to your honour meant;

But

But did not speak at all, his heart was full,
 And so was mine—to see him look so dull.
 I hope, said I, e'er many days are o'er,
 It will please Heaven your father to restore.

CLOSE by the kitchen-fire we'd held our chat,
 Where Mr. Yorick's curate smoaking fat,
 But did not speak a word, or good or bad
 By way of comfort to the weeping lad.
 I'm sure I think 'twas very wrong in him,
 Indeed, my uncle said, I think so Trim.
 After he'd had the wine and toast we heard
 The poor Lieutenant was a little cheer'd,
 And sent a message down to let me know
 That in ten minutes, if I did not go
 He should be glad if I would step up stairs.
 I think (the landlord said) he is going to prayers.
 I saw the book, and as I shut the door
 His son was kneeling down upon the floor.

WHY Mr. Trim, I thought, the curate said,
 You Army gentlemen had never pray'd.
 He pray'd last night, and most devoutly too;
 Replied the hostess, that I'm sure is true.
 Indeed, said I, your Reverence is not right,
 For when a foldier is engaged to fight
 For King and Country, Life and Honour too,
 With Death each moment stalking in his view,
 In such a case, I dare be bold to say,
 I know of none has greater cause to pray;
 But when he is drove about from town to town,
 In dang'rous marches harass'd up and down,
 Resting upon his arms the livelong night,
 The next beat up before the morning light;
 Standing in water up above his knees,
 Detach'd about without a moment's ease,
 Benumn'd with cold, his feeling almost gone,
 Without a bit of straw to kneel upon.
 An please your reverence he is but a man,
 And must pray when, and where, and how he can.
Soldiers

Soldiers, I dare believe, as oft are seen
 At prayers as churchmen by their choice I mean,
 Though not with such hypocrisy and fust,
 Which only makes their faults appear the worse:
 There's no religion in so much parade;
 Hold, said the Major, that was harshly said;
 Believe me Trim, that speech was wrong in you,
 God only knoweth—who is false or true.
 But when the last and great account shall come,
 And all Mankind receive their final doom,
 Then, Trim, and not till then, it will appear
 Whose actions were from vice and error clear.
 That Power supreme, who judges by the heart,
 Pays no distinction to the outer part:
 He is so good, so merciful—and just
 To all who put in him their hope and trust,
 Depend upon it, he will then bestow
 A just reward for what we've done below.
 And rest assur'd those have no cause of fear
 Who strictly shall perform their duty here,
 Whether in red or black they may appear.

This

This promise, by our heavenly father made
 In various parts of scripture is display'd,
 Which for our comfort we should often read;
 But more of this hereafter—come proceed.

WHEN I was sure the time was quite expir'd
 Said Trim, I went up stairs, as he desir'd.
 Poor gentleman, he lay upon the bed
 His arm scarce able to support his head;
 The other hand was on the prayer book laid.
 If you are Captain Shandy's man, he said,
 My grateful thanks are to your master due:
 My little boy, sir, he must thank him too
 For his obliging courtesy to me.
 But if I may presume to make so free,
 Was he of Levens's? I said you were;
 Then, reply'd he, I think I knew him there:
 I too am of that company's remains,
 And served with him in Flanders three Campaigns;
 My

My name Le Fevre—but he knows me not ;

My story too perhaps he has forgot.

Tell him, I was the Officer whose wife

Was by a musket shot depriv'd of life,

As in my arms she lay, within my tent.

I said I well rememher'd that event.

Do you indeed ? he answer'd with a sigh,

If you remember it, then well may I.

He wip'd his eyes; then gently drew a ring

Hung next his bosom by a little string;

Kist it and call'd his son, who eager flew

Across the room, knelt down and kist it too,

Then kist his father's hand, and having shed

A flood of tears, sat down upon the bed.

My Uncle shook his head, and sighing deep,

I wish, he said, I wish I was asleep.

Your honour is too much concern'd I think,

The Corp'ral said, will you not please to drink?

Let

Let me pour out some sack you must be dry.
 Do Trim, he answer'd, with another sigh.
 Le Fevre's story I remember well,
 And for some reason, what I cannot tell,
 By the whole corps it was with pity heard,
 But virtue, Trim, will ever be rever'd.
 Come end the story that you are upon;
 Sir, quoth the Corp'ral, 'tis already done.
 I could no longer stay, so bade good night,
 While young Le Fevre follow'd with a light
 To see me down the stairs; and as we went,
 He said their journey was to Flanders bent
 To join the Army—but of that no more;
 Poor gentleman, his last day's march is o'er,
 Alas! my uncle said, when he is gone,
 What will become of the poor boy his son?

HERE, to the Major's honour be it said,
 Tho' all the day he had his skill display'd

In

In taking Dendermond by a surprife,
 And joining in the fiege, with the allies,
 Who carried on the work, with fo much heat,
 That fcarcely had allow'd him time to eat.
 But fince the affecting ftory Trim had brought,
 The fiege was wholly banifh'd from his thought.
 He gave up Dendermond, juft as it flood,
 To be reliev'd or not—as France thought good,
 And turn'd his thoughts on what could beft be done
 To help the poor lieutenant and his fon.

THAT gracious being, to the poor a friend,
 Shall amply recompence thee in the end.

You left this matter fhort my uncle faid,
 As Trim was waiting to prepare the bed.
 A poor Lieutenant's pay, all he can do,
 Is a fmall pittance, to provide for two:
 Sicknefs and travelling muft make it worfe,
 You therefore fhould have offer'd him my purfe.

You know I fet so little store by pelf,
 He'd be as welcome to it as myself.
 That Sir, said Trim, I'm sure is very true,
 But I receiv'd no such command from you.
 There Trim, I find, you don't distinguish right,
 Nor see this matter in a proper light,
 Tho' as a soldier you might right proceed,
 Yet, as a man — 'twas very wrong indeed.

ANOTHER reason I shall now produce,
 For which, perhaps, you'll plead the same excuse.
 As true benevolence lies not in words,
 When you had offer'd, what my house affords,
 You should have offer'd an asylum too,
 As a sick brother soldier, 'tis his due.
 Besides, if we could have him with us here,
 We should restore him quite I do not fear:
 You'r a good nurse yourself, I know you are,
 And what with yours and the old woman's care,
 With

With the assistance of his boy and me,
 You know not how successful we may be
 To set him once more on his legs again,
 And make him fit to march the next campaign.
 Alas, quoth Trim, he cannot march at all :
 Fear not my Uncle said, he must, he shall.
 Why bless me, sir, he cannot even stand;
 Then, Trim, we must bestow a helping hand.
 Indeed, your honour it will be in vain,
 He never in this world—will march again;
 He's gone too for human pow'r, to save,
 Nor ere will travel more, but to the grave.
 Take courage man, perhaps the worst is past;
 We will support him—he will drop at last.
 We two must bear him up—at least we'll try;
 The Major said—by G—— he shall not die.

THE accusing spirit, here reluctant soar'd
 To Heaven's bright chanc'ry with the offending
 word :

But doubting, if to deem the oath a sin,
 Blush'd as he gave the accusation in ;
 While that angelic being, who's assign'd
 T' record the various actions of mankind,
 Scarce let the sentence from his pen appear,
 Blotting it out forever with a tear.

AFTER a moment's pause, my uncle cried,
 To morrow morning Trim do you provide
 A good physician for the poor sick man,
 And then we'll execute our little plan.
 I hope it will succeed ; I hope so too
 Said Trim, then bowing, for the night withdrew.

THE sun next morn with cheerful lustre shone
 To all but poor Le Fevre and his son ;
 The hand of Death press'd heavy on his heart,
 And life's clog'd wheels could scarce perform their
 part.

Long 'ere his usual time the Major rose,
 The last night's tale had shortened his repose.
 Benevolent of heart he ever strove

To

To sooth the sorrows he could not remove.
 The pleasing task impatient to begin,
 With eager steps he hastened to the inn.
 Sweet consolation, ready to bestow,
 Approach'd the chamber of pathetic woe.
 But ah—too late alas the kind intent,
 For poor Le Fevre's life is almost spent.
 My uncle crost the room with gentle tread,
 Then took a chair and plac'd it near the bed;
 Drew back the curtain with the easy air
 Of an old friend, and brother of the war;
 Ask'd how he rested, what was his disease,
 And if he could do ought to give him ease:
 Nor waiting a reply, repeated o'er
 The little plan laid down the night before.
 Cheer up, he said, you shall command my purse,
 We'll get a doctor, Trim shall be your nurse;
 Yourself and son, shall now go home with me,
 And I Le Fevre will your servant be.

THERE

THERE was in all my uncle's looks and mien,
 That easy frankness ever to be seen,
 That pleasing freedom unadorn'd by art,
 Which spoke at once the goodness of his heart,
 That true benevolence of soul display'd,
 Which bid the afflicted fly to him for aid,
 Nor fear repulse their feelings to annoy,
 Such was the effect on poor Le Fevre's boy,
 Who, drown'd in tears was kneeling by the bed,
 Cheer'd by my uncle's voice he rais'd his head,
 The friendly offer on his fire bestow'd;
 His little heart with gratitude o'erflow'd;
 Wishful he look'd, embolden'd by degrees,
 Gently drew near and clasp'd my uncle's knees.

LE FEVRE'S blood, which now from ev'ry part
 Retreated to its citadel the heart;
 Here rallied back, while struggling nature tries
 To speak a father's feelings in his eyes.

Those

Those eyes which now were doom'd to look their
last,

Up to my uncle's face he wishful cast,

As if to ask protection for his son :

Nature then ebb'd again—her work was done ;

The pulse throb'd—stop'd—then flutter'd as be-
fore,

Then stop'd—what shall I say—to beat no more.

My uncle rais'd the youth whom sorrow drown'd,
Both follow'd the Lieutenant to the ground ;

And as a friendly tribute to the brave,

The Major dropt a tear upon his grave ;

The last sad duty to the father done,

His only care was to protect the son ;

Affur'd he should no interruption find,

As poor Le Fevre left no wealth behind.

When all was settl'd, what remain'd to hoard

Was but a military coat and sword ;

The coat my uncle bid the Corp'ral take,

And wear it for the poor Lieutenant's sake ;

Then

Then took the sword, and with an earnest look
 He drew it from the scabbard as he spoke;
 And this, Le Fevre, my dear boy said he,
 Is all that Fortune has bequeath'd to thee.
 But if kind Heaven has blest thee with a heart
 To act thro' life an honourable part,
 To draw this sword—not for a vain applause
 But in religion's and your country's cause;
 To right the injur'd and assist the poor;
 That is enough, dear boy, I ask no more.
 My uncle, prompted by a feeling heart,
 Prepar'd to act the true paternal part;
 Gave him instructions on his fav'rite plan,
 And form'd the hero in the future man;
 Each moral duty on his mind imprest,
 But one injunction far above the rest,
 That truth should all his thoughts and actions rule.
 Thus form'd he sent him to a public school,
 Where he continued till the loud alarms,
 Which fill'd all Europe of the Emperor's arms

Prepar'd against the Turks, his thoughts inspir'd,
 And his young heart with martial ardor fir'd,
 He left his studies and a calm retreat,
 And threw himself at his protector's feet,
 His kind permission eager to obtain,
 To try his fortune in the next campaign,
 Under the brave Eugene. Rous'd by that sound
 My uncle twice forgot his former wound,
 And twice he said I'll be myself your guide,
 And thou shalt fight, Le Fevre, by my side;
 Then recollecting his unhappy state,
 Hung down his head and silent mourn'd his fate.
 Le Fevre having gained his free consent,
 In preparation some few weeks was spent
 To equip the youth for search of future fame.
 At length the hour of his departure came,
 The Major then presented to his hand
 His father's sword, which Trim by his command
 Had brightened up—if you expect applause
 Use it, he said, in no ignoble cause,

It will not fail thee. If thou'rt brave—but stay
 Musing awhile he said—but fortune may,
 And if she does—come back again to me,
 My house shall ever your asylum be ;
 And then we'll shape thee out some other course,
 True virtue cannot want for a resource.

THE greatest injury in Fortune's store
 Could not have touch'd the young Le Fevre more
 Than so much kindness from my uncle shewn.
 He left him as the most obedient son
 Would from the most indulgent father part;
 So grateful were the feelings of his heart,
 Each dropt a tear, prepar'd to bid adieu;
 Just then the Major from his pocket drew
 A purse of gold in which there was contain'd
 His mother's ring, and slipt it in his hand ;
 Pray'd God to bless him, took a last embrace.
 With tearful eyes Le Fevre left the place ;

But

But hopes of fame his spirits soon reviv'd,
 At the Imperial army he arriv'd
 In time to try of what his sword was made
 Just at the Turks defeat, before Belgrade ;
 But from that moment fortune turn'd aside,
 Nor longer deigned his youthful steps to guide.
 A constant train of undeserved ill
 Which ever way he turn'd pursu'd him still
 Without cessation, for four years or more,
 Which with a manly fortitude he bore
 Each fresh attack, still patient to endure,
 Nor murmur'd at the ills he could not cure.
 At last a fatal stroke his strength assails,
 A fit of sickness seized him at Marseilles,
 From whence he wrote my uncle Toby word,
 He'd lost his time, his health, all but his sword,
 And waited for a ship to cross the seas,
 Once more to clasp his benefactor's knees,
 Would gracious Heaven his former health restore,
 And guide him safe to Britain's happy shore.



